



**Family and Social Services
Administration (FSSA),
Office of Early Childhood and
Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL)**

Request for Funds

OECOSL-02-15

Solicitation For:

Workforce and Professional Development Services

Response Due Date: April 24, 2015

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUESTED SERVICES

This is a Request for Funding announcement (RFF) issued by the Family and Social Services Administration/Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) .

This RFF is intended to publicize the availability of Grant opportunities for services described herein. Neither the issuance of this RFF nor the receipt of any responses thereto, shall create any obligation to the State of Indiana to make any award pursuant hereto. The award of any grant(s) as a result of this RFF shall be at the sole discretion of FSSA. Neither this RFF nor any response (“proposal”) submitted hereto are to be construed as a legal offer.

1.1 Confidential Information

Potential respondents are advised that materials contained in proposals are subject to the Indiana Public Records Act, IC 5-14-3 *et seq.*, and after the grant is awarded may be viewed and/or copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors. Potential respondents claiming a statutory exception to the Indiana Public Records Act must place all confidential documents in a sealed envelope clearly marked “Confidential” and must indicate on the outside of their proposal envelope that confidential materials are included and, in their cover letter, specify which statutory exception provision applies. The State reserves the right to make determinations of confidentiality. If the State does not agree that the information designated is confidential under one of the disclosure exceptions to the Public Records Act, it may either reject the proposal or discuss its interpretation of the allowable exceptions with the respondent. If agreement can be reached, the proposal will be considered. If agreement cannot be reached, the State will remove the proposal from consideration for award and return the proposal to the respondent upon request. The State will not determine price to be confidential information.

1.2 Compensation

FSSA/OECOSL encourages respondents, in their responses to the RFF, to be as creative as possible regarding cost to the State, as cost efficiency for the State will be a consideration in determining whether a grant(s) will be awarded based on responses to the RFF.

1.3 Ineligible Applicants

Due to potential conflicts of interest the following are not eligible to apply:

- CCDF Central Reimbursement Office
- Organizations performing child care ratings for the Paths to QUALITY™ system

1.4 Terms

This agreement shall be for a period of twenty-four (24) months commencing on October 1, 2015, and terminating on September 30, 2017 and may be renewed by amendment for an additional twenty-four (24) months based upon available funding and previous performance.

1.5 Pre-Proposal Conference

A pre-proposal conference will be held **March 20, 2015, 1:00 pm Eastern Time in the Indiana Government Center South, conference room 17**. At this conference, potential respondents may ask questions about the RFF and the RFF process. Respondents are reminded that no answers issued verbally at the conference are binding on the State, and any information provided at the conference, unless it is later issued in writing, also is not binding on the State.

1.6 Questions

All inquiries related to the RFF are to be submitted electronically to Melanie Brizzi at Melanie.Brizzi@fssa.in.gov and are not to be directed to any other staff member of FSSA. Such action may disqualify respondent from further consideration for a grant as a result of this RFF. Questions must be received by 4:30 pm ET on March 23, 2015. Questions received after 4:30 p.m. may not be considered. Please keep questions brief and of high priority. Responses to all questions will be promptly prepared by OECOSL and posted at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4845.htm>.

1.7 Proposals

Respondents interested in providing these services to FSSA/OECOSL should submit proposals in the following manner: **one original hard-copy** (marked "Original") and **one original CD-ROM (marked "Original") and five (5) CD-ROMs, each containing one** complete copy of the proposal, including the Transmittal Letter and other related documentation as required in this RFF. The **original** CD-ROM will be considered the official response in evaluating responses for scoring and protest resolution.

Melanie Brizzi
Family and Social Services Administration
Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning
402 W. Washington Street, W 361
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Email Address: Melanie.Brizzi@fssa.in.gov

Print copies must be assembled in the following manner:

1. Transmittal Letter (see section 2)
2. Respondent Information (Complete Attachment A)
3. Proposal (Complete Attachments C and E)
4. Cost Proposal (Complete Attachment D)
5. Signed Certification and Assurances (Attachment F)
6. Organizational chart for overall agency with grant funded positions shown with dotted lines. (Please indicate percentage of position to be funded by grant.)
7. Most recent audit report made in accordance with OMB circular A-133, if applicable.

Proposals, CD-ROMS and hardcopies, must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time on April 24, 2015. Proposals received after 4:30 p.m. will not be considered.

In the cover letter please indicate the principal contact for the proposal along with a telephone and fax number. **All proposals must have an electronic mailing address included.**

Hand-delivered solicitation responses: To facilitate weapons restrictions at Indiana Government Center North and Indiana Government Center South, as of **July 21, 2008**, the public must enter IGC buildings through a designated public entrance. The public entrance to Indiana Government Center South is located at 302 W. Washington St. (the eastern-most Washington St. entrance). This entrance will be equipped with metal detectors and screening devices monitored by Indiana State Police Capitol Police. Passing through the public entrance may take some time. Please be sure to take this information into consideration if your company plans to submit a solicitation response in person.

Shipped or mailed solicitation responses: United States Postal Express and Certified Mail are both delivered to the Government Center Central Mailroom, and not directly to the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL). It is the responsibility of the Respondent to make sure that solicitation responses are received by the OCEOCL Room W361 on or before the designated time and date. Late submissions will not be accepted. The OECOSL clock is the official time for all solicitation submissions.

All proposal packages must be clearly marked RFF Workforce and Professional Development Services, due date, and time due. Any proposal received by the OECOSL after the due date and time will not be considered. Any late proposals will be returned, unopened, to the Respondent upon request. All rejected proposals not claimed within 30 days of the proposal due date will be destroyed.

1.8 Best and Final Offer

The State may request best and final offers from those Respondents determined by the State to be reasonably viable for contract award. However, the State reserves the right to award a contract on the basis of initial proposals received. Therefore, each proposal should contain the Respondent's best terms from a price and technical standpoint.

Following evaluation of the best and final offers the State may select offers that are most advantageous to the State, for final contract negotiations/execution considering the cost and the evaluation criteria in this RFF.

1.9 OECOSL Overview

The following provides an overview of the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning OECOSL functions, descriptions of the services required from the selected Respondent providing Workforce and Professional Development Services, and other conditions that must be met for the Respondent to be considered for recommendation for award.

In responding to this RFF, Respondents should identify and discuss any potential challenges that may arise in providing RFF services and offer solutions to resolve these challenges. In addition, the Family and Social Services Administration, OECOSL encourages all Respondents to display comprehensive and innovative techniques that would enhance quality of care, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of services, and provide the best outcomes for all stakeholders. Respondents should also demonstrate an ability to effectively collaborate with other stakeholders in ways that maximize return on investment and positive community, family and provider outcomes.

The vision of Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL) is that every Indiana community will have a strong network of Early Care and Education (ECE) and Out-of-School time (OST) programs that support the child, the family and local schools. Programs will be high quality, affordable and accessible, enabling families to work effectively to obtain economic self-sufficiency. Children will thrive in programs that

meet their developmental needs and make them feel welcome, encouraged and supported. Professionals teaching and caring for children have the resources, including training and education, needed to operate and maintain high quality programs.

OECOSL responsibilities include the administration of the Child Care Development Block Grant, the child care voucher assistance program (CCDF vouchers), child care licensing, registration and certification, the State's pre-k initiatives including the Early Education Matching Grants and On My Way Pre-K, School Age Child Care Grants, and the Head Start Collaboration Office. Additionally OECOSL provides grant opportunities, such as this RFF, for services shown to improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of ECE and OST programs—including funding and partnering in a variety of initiatives such as Paths to QUALITY™, scholarships, trainings, technical assistance and other professional development activities for educators teaching and caring for children birth to 13, and the provision of consumer awareness and community outreach activities including family referral activities designed to increase awareness of the importance of quality ECE and OST programs to assist families in making choices that best meets the needs of their child.

The State of Indiana regulates multiple types of child care providers: licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, unlicensed registered child care ministries and legally licensed exempt homes and centers. Licensed child care centers are nonresidential buildings in which at least one child receives care for regular compensation for more than four hours but less than twenty-four hours in each of ten consecutive business days. Licensed child care homes are residential structures in which not more than 16 children, depending on the type of Licensed Home, receive care for regular compensation within the same time parameters of licensed child care centers. Unlicensed registered child care ministries are operated by a church or other religious organization that is exempt from federal taxes. Additionally, the State allows Legally Licensed-Exempt Providers (LLEPs) to participate in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. These providers, as well as Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministries, must meet criteria defined in **IC 12-17.2-3.5**. Each of these provider types is eligible to participate in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) voucher program after they have passed an on-site inspection.

To support the goal of ensuring access to high-quality child care, OECOSL administers a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) named Paths to QUALITY™. Paths to QUALITY provides parents an easily recognizable symbol of the quality of participating providers. Paths to QUALITY is a voluntary four level system. Providers are enrolled and assessed to determine their quality rating level. Providers then work towards higher levels of quality by meeting the standards for each subsequent level. As providers progress through the system, significant supports are offered to programs including on-site consultation and coaching, professional development opportunities, scholarships awards and incentives. An independent team of Paths to QUALITY raters validate that all standards for the requested level are being met. Additional information about Paths to QUALITY can be found on the OECOSL website at www.childcarefinder.in.gov and www.childcareindiana.org.

1.10 Summary of Requested Services

This RFF is to solicit a vendor to provide services that will support the development of an Early Care and Education System that promotes continuous quality improvement based on best practice and research evidence that will meet the objectives of OECOSL and result in the desired outcomes for children, families and communities. Some of these services are required within Indiana state statute or the Indiana CCDF State Plan; many are required activities of the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations.

Requested services include collaborative effort in the development of a professional development system for the early childhood and out of school learning workforce that will improve the quality of early care and education programs resulting in positive child outcomes to meet the State's vision and priorities; awarding credit-based scholarships and providing counseling and guidance for CDA, Associate, Bachelor, and Master degree scholarship recipients; providing non-credit based CDA credential training; and maintaining and increasing the number of formal articulation agreements between Indiana's higher education institutions for early childhood and out of school learning workforce.

Requested services also include participation in system building and strategic planning for Indiana's quality rating system, Paths to QUALITY™; maintaining highly qualified and skilled coaching staff to provide on-site and off-site support to providers enrolled in Paths to QUALITY; providing financial incentives and awards per the Paths to QUALITY program guidelines; facilitating the national accreditation and reaccreditation process for programs including financial and technical support; and collecting data pertinent to ECE and OST programs in Indiana

Full details of the requested services may be found in the Scope of Work, Attachment B.

1.11 RFF Timeframe

March 16, 2015	RFF released to potential applicants
March 20, 2015	Pre-proposal Conference
March 23, 2015	RFF questions due
March 26, 2015	RFF answers posted online
April 24, 2015	RFF proposals due by 4:30 EST
May 15, 2015	Grant award notification

1.12 Grant Term

Selected applicants will receive a grant for a period of twenty-four (24) months commencing on **October 1, 2015, and terminating on September 30, 2017** and may be renewed by amendment for an additional twenty-four (24) months based upon available funding and previous performance.

1.13 Funding

The total funding for RFF services is approximately \$5.2 M annually. Innovative approaches beyond the core services specified by the Scope of Work may be proposed. All proposed activities must be evidence based and sufficiently justified within the proposal. Funding of any proposed activities is subject to the availability of funding and the State's discretion.

Grantee will be reimbursed on an actual cost reimbursement basis for allowable costs. Food costs for events or trainings are not allowable.

A detailed line item budget for each year of the proposal must be included using Attachment D, Cost Proposal Template.

Potential respondents should develop a budget appropriate to their organization's capabilities to deliver quality services. Shared costs must be appropriately allocated and response must include a written cost allocation plan for each shared cost.

Submitted budget amount is subject to review by the State and may be modified for those respondents selected to receive an award.

The budget for project services for the current contract year, FY2015 is available on Attachment H. This is provided for historical purposes only. Funds awarded may be less than the stated amount. Grant awards for this program are subject to annual budgetary fluctuations associated with the availability of Federal and State funding. Total federal and state funding available to OECOSL for fiscal year **October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016** is unknown at this time.

1.14 Application

Applicants must submit a proposal for the delivery of all services identified under Detailed Scope of Work, Attachment B. There are several parts to the application. Respondents must use the appropriate template to complete each part of the proposal. Refer to the list of Attachments on page 10 of this RFF. All required attachments must be included when submitting the proposal. Incomplete applications will not be scored.

In responding to this RFF, Respondents should identify and discuss any problems that may arise in providing project services and offer solutions to resolve these problems. In addition, the FSSA, OECOSL encourages all

Respondents to display comprehensive and innovative techniques that would improve professional development opportunities, teacher and caregiver competencies and knowledge, developmental outcomes for children and the effectiveness of technical assistance services including Paths to QUALITY coaching.

1.15 Estimated Target Population for RFF Services

Please see Reference Appendices K, L, M* for information related to the target populations.

*Data from January 2015

1.16 Attachment List

Attachment A	Respondent Information
Attachment B	Scope of Work
Attachment C	Technical Proposal
Attachment D	Cost Proposal
Attachment E	Business Proposal
Attachment F	Certification Statement and Assurances
Attachment G	Sample Grant Agreement
Attachment H	Historic Budget Information
Attachment I	Glossary
Attachment J	Required Education and Experience Qualifications and Critical Functions
Attachment K	Paths to QUALITY program counts by county (<i>Target Populations for Requested Services</i>)
Attachment L	OECOSL Monthly Licensing Report for January 2015 (<i>Target Populations for Requested</i>

	<i>Services)</i>
Attachment M	Monthly Paths to QUALITY summary report for January 2015 (<i>Target Populations for Requested Services</i>)
Attachment N	Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Overview Report for State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Leaders
Attachment O	Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) Overview
Attachment P	NAEYC/NACCRRA Training and Technical Assistance Glossary
Attachment Q	INPDN Core Knowledge and Competencies Document
Attachment R	Paths to QUALITY Policy Manual

2. PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

2.1 General

To facilitate the timely evaluation of proposals, a standard format for proposal submission has been developed and is described in this section. All Respondents are required to format their proposals in a manner consistent with the guidelines described below:

- Each item must be addressed in the Respondent's proposal.
- The Transmittal Letter must be in the form of a letter.
- The business and technical proposals must be submitted using the template and organized under the specific section titles as listed below.
- A complete proposal must include:
 - 1) the Transmittal Letter;
 - 2) completed respondent information form, attachment A;
 - 3) the Business Proposal, Attachment E; (check on place for references)
 - 4) the Technical Proposal, Attachment C ;
 - 5) the Cost Proposal, Attachment D ;
 - 6) the signed statement of Minimum Requirements assurances, Attachment F;
 - 7) any attachments required by the preparation instructions such as the organization chart and past audits; and

2.2 Transmittal Letter

The Transmittal Letter must address the following topics except those specifically identified as “optional.”

2.2.1 Agreement With Requirements as Listed within the RFF And Agreement with Assurances Contained in Attachment F

The Respondent must explicitly acknowledge understanding of the general information presented in an agreement with any requirements/conditions listed within the RFF and attachment J.

2.2.2 Summary of Ability and Desire to Supply the Required Services

The Transmittal Letter must briefly summarize the Respondent’s ability to supply the requested services that meet the requirements defined in this RFF. The Respondent shall clearly state whether or not it is currently providing RFF services for Indiana. If the Respondent is not currently providing RFF services the letter must demonstrate how the Respondent will ensure operational readiness to begin work no later than October 1, 2015. The letter must also contain a statement indicating the Respondent’s willingness to provide the requested services subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFF including, but not limited to, the State’s mandatory grant agreement clauses.

2.2.3 Signature of Authorized Representative

A person authorized to commit the Respondent to its representations and who can certify that the information offered in the proposal meets all general conditions must sign the Transmittal Letter. In the Transmittal Letter, please indicate the principal contact for the proposal along with an address, telephone and fax number as well as an e-mail address, if that contact is different from the individual authorized for signature.

2.2.4 Respondent Notification

Include the name, mailing address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the Respondent’s point-of-contact for this proposal. Respondents will be advised of the outcome of the RFF process and notice of award via e-mail.

It is the Respondent’s obligation to notify the The Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning of any changes in contact information that may have occurred since the origination of this solicitation. The Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning will not be held responsible for incorrect respondent addresses.

2.2.5 Other Information

This item is optional. Any other information the Respondent may wish to briefly summarize will be acceptable.

2.3 Business Proposal

The Business Proposal must include a Table of Contents, be continuously paginated, and address the following topics except those specifically identified as “optional.” and must follow the template found in **Attachment E**.

2.3.1 General (Optional)

This section of the business proposal may be used to introduce or summarize any information the Respondent deems relevant or important to the State’s successful acquisition of services requested in this RFF.

2.3.2 Respondent’s Organizational Structure

The legal form of the Respondent’s business organization, the state in which formed (accompanied by a certificate of authority), the types of business ventures in which the organization is involved, and a chart of the organization are to be included in this section.

2.3.3 Respondent’s Financial Information

This section must include the Respondent’s financial statement, including an income statement and balance sheet, or audit results for each of the two most recently completed fiscal years. The financial statements /audits must demonstrate the Respondent’s financial stability.

2.3.4 Agency Executive

This section must include the name(s) and contact information of Agency Executives who are responsible for the contract and who will serve as points of escalation for the State should areas of concern arise.

2.3.5 Integrity of Company Structure and Financial Reporting

This section must include a statement indicating that the CEO and/or CFO has taken personal responsibility for the thoroughness and correctness of any/all financial information supplied with this proposal.

2.3.6 Grant Terms/Clauses

A sample agreement that the state expects to execute with the successful Respondent(s) is provided in Attachment G. This contract contains both mandatory and non-mandatory clauses. Mandatory clauses are non-negotiable. Other clauses are highly desirable. Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22,

24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 of the sample grant agreement are mandatory clauses. It is the State's expectation that the final grant agreement will be substantially similar to the sample provided in Attachment G.

The Transmittal Letter requires your acknowledgement and acceptance of the mandatory grant terms. In this section of the Business proposal, please review the rest of the grant agreement and indicate your acceptance of the non-mandatory clauses. If a non-mandatory clause is not acceptable as worded, suggest specific alternative wording to address issues raised by the specific clause. If you require additional grant terms please include them in this section. To reiterate it's the State's strong desire to not deviate from the grant agreement provided in the attachment and as such the State reserves the right to reject any and all of these requested changes.

Any or all portions of this RFF and any or all portions of the Respondents response will be incorporated as part of the final grant agreement.

2.3.7 References

The Respondent must include three (3) references. References must be from clients for whom the Respondent has provided services that are the same or similar to those services requested in this RFP. Information provided should include the name, address, and telephone number of the client facility, the name, title, and phone/fax numbers of a person who may be contacted for further information, the types of services provided and the dates such services were provided.

2.3.8 Registration to do Business

If awarded the contract, the Respondent will be required to be registered, and be in good standing, with the Secretary of State. The registration requirement is applicable to all limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, corporations, S-corporations, nonprofit corporations and limited liability companies. The Respondent must indicate the status of registration, if applicable, in this section of the proposal.

2.3.9 Subgrantees

The Respondent is responsible for the performance of any obligations that may result from this RFF, and shall not be relieved by the non-performance of any subgrantee. Any subgrantee agreements entered into by the Respondent must be in compliance with all State statutes, and will be subject to the provisions thereof. For each portion of the proposed services to be provided by a subgrantee, the technical proposal must include the identification of the functions to be provided by the subgrantee and the subgrantee's related qualifications and experience.

The combined qualifications and experience of the Respondent and any or all subgrantees will be considered in the State's evaluation. The Respondent must furnish information to the State as to the amount of the subgrant, the qualifications of the subgrantee for guaranteeing performance, and any other data that may be required by the State. All subgrants held by the Respondent must be made available upon request for inspection and examination by appropriate State officials, and such relationships must meet with the approval of the State.

The Respondent must list each subgrantee's name, address and the state where required products or services are being performed or executed. The Respondent must also include the subgrantee's

responsibilities under the proposal, anticipated dollar amount for subgrant, the subgrantee's form of organization, and an indication from the subgrantees of a willingness to carry out these responsibilities. This assurance in no way relieves the Respondent of any responsibilities in responding to this RFF or in completing the commitments documented in the proposal.

2.3.10 Experience Serving State Governments

Each Respondent is asked to provide a brief description of its company's experience in serving state governments and/or quasi-governmental accounts.

2.3.11 Experience Providing Workforce and Professional Development Services

Each Respondent is asked to describe its company's experience in providing workforce and professional development or similar services.

2.4 Technical Proposal

The Technical Proposal must have a Table of Contents, be continuously paginated, and follow the template in **Attachment C**.

The Technical Proposal should include each point of every section in of the detailed Scope of Work, **Attachment B**, and be addressed in order of the attachment. RFF language should not be simply repeated within the response as evidence of understanding or capability. Where appropriate, supporting documentation may be included in the appendix and referenced by a clearly understandable page and paragraph number. However, when this is done, the body of the technical proposal must contain a meaningful summary of the referenced material. Any referenced documents must be included as an appendix ("Reference Documents") to the technical proposal with referenced sections clearly marked. Multiple references or multiple documents must be listed and organized for ease of use by the State.

If respondent is not the current grantee the proposal must include details on steps the respondent will take to ensure operational readiness by October 1, 2015.

The template includes a final entry for implementation and termination of the project. It is the State's intent that this entry be used by the Respondent to differentiate and demonstrate the value added by its proposed solution.

2.5 Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal Template is Attachment D. Respondents must use the template in **Attachment D** to provide pricing for the services proposed by the Respondent for this RFP.

3. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

3.1 Proposal Evaluation Procedure

The State has selected a group of personnel to act as a proposal evaluation team. Subgroups of this team, consisting of one or more team members, will be responsible for evaluating proposals with regard to compliance with RFF requirements. All evaluation personnel will use the evaluation criteria stated in Section 3.2.

The State reserves the right to request oral presentations from respondents as deemed necessary. Oral presentations will occur during the week of April 27, 2015.

The procedure for evaluating the proposals against the evaluation criteria will be as follows:

3.1.1 Adherence to Requirements

Each proposal will be evaluated for adherence to requirements on a pass/fail basis. Proposals that are incomplete or otherwise do not conform to proposal submission requirements (format) may be eliminated from consideration.

3.1.2 Categories

Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the categories included in Section 3.2. A point score has been established for each category.

3.1.3 Further Action

Based on the results of this evaluation, the qualifying proposal determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into account all of the evaluation factors, may be selected for further action, such as contract negotiations. If, however, if the State decides that no proposal is sufficiently advantageous to the State, the State may take whatever further action is deemed necessary to fulfill its needs. If, for any reason, a proposal is selected and it is not possible to consummate a grant with the Respondent, the State may begin contract preparation with the next qualified Respondent or determine that no such alternate proposal exists.

3.2 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the proven ability of the Respondent to satisfy the requirements of the RFF in a cost-effective manner. Each of the evaluation criteria categories is described below with a brief explanation of the basis for evaluation in that category. The points associated with each category are indicated

following the category name (total maximum points = 100).

Summary of Evaluation Criteria:

Criteria	Points
1. Adherence to Mandatory Requirements	Pass/Fail
2. Business Proposal	10 points
3. Technical Proposal	70 points
4. Cost (Cost Proposal)	20 points
Total	100 points

Each section will be evaluated based on:

1. The Respondent's demonstration of its understanding of the requirement(s) and how the requirements will be implemented;
2. The Respondent's demonstration of experience and expertise in implementing the requirement(s);
3. The Respondent's demonstration of the value-added by its solution and/or methodology of fulfilling the requirement(s).

The Secretary of FSSA or her designee will, in the exercise of their sole discretion, determine which proposal(s) offer the best means of servicing the interests of the State. The exercise of this discretion will be final.